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ABSTRACT

This study extends previous research investigating the extent to which leadership behavior evaluations are a function of the sex of the leader being evaluated as well as the evaluator's sex. Androgyny (the masculinity/femininity of the evaluator's own personality) was added as a possible predictor, and the evaluator's occupational level (student vs. manager). Four general hypotheses were tested: evaluations of leadership behavior are a function of (1) sex of the leader, (2) sex, (3) androgyny, and (4) evaluator's occupational level. Undergraduate business students and managers in evening courses (total N= 335) were administered one of two versions of a questionnaire containing four stories, each depicting a leadership style. Managers' names were altered to indicate males or females. Also, subjects filled out an androgyny scale twice, once describing themselves and once describing a "good manager." They were then classified into four categories: masculine, feminine, androgynous, and neutral. Answers to eight evaluative questions for each leadership style were subjected to multiple analyses of variance. In general results failed to support both the sex and androgyny hypotheses. Occupational level was the best predictor. These and prior results concerning sex as an explanatory variable in leadership research are discussed in light of current social awareness of sex-role stereotypes. (Author)

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EVALUATIONS OF LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOR:

DO SEX OR ANDROGYNY MATTER?

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EVALUATIONS OF LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOR: DO SEX OR ANDROGYNY MATTER?

Abstract

This study extends previous research investigating the extent to which evaluations of leadership behavior are a function of the sex of the leader being evaluated as well as the sex of the person doing the evaluating. Androgyny (the masculinity/femininity of the evaluator's own personality) was added as a possible predictor, in addition to the occupational level of the evaluator (student vs. manager).

Four general hypotheses were tested: evaluations of leadership behavior are a function of 1) sex of the leader; and 2) sex, 3) androgyny, 4) occupational level of the evaluator. Undergraduate business students and managers in evening courses (total N = 335) were administered one of two versions of a questionnaire containing four stories, each depicting a leadership style based on one of the following dimensions: initiating structure, production emphasis, consideration, and tolerance for freedom. Managers' names were altered in the two versions to indicate males or females. In addition, subjects filled out an androgyny scale twice, once describing themselves and once describing "a good manager." They were then classified into four categories: masculine, feminine, androgynous, and neutral.

Answers to eight evaluative questions for each of the leadership styles were subjected to multiple analyses of variance. Although results varied slightly for different styles, in general they failed to support both the sex and androgyny hypotheses. Occupational level was the best predictor.

These and prior results concerning sex as an explanatory variable in leadership research are discussed in light of current social awareness of sex-role stereotypes.

EVALUATIONS OF LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOR: DO SEX OR ANDROGYNY MATTER?

We know a lot about leadership. At least, we should know a lot about leadership, given the enormous amount of research conducted in this area. Most of our knowledge, however, is about male leaders. Given traditional sex roles in our culture coupled with the increasing emergence of more women into leadership positions, the possibility that our body of knowledge about leadership may be relevant for only half the population is unfortunate. It is an unfortunate limitation on theories of behavior in organizations, and it is an unfortunate limitation on resources to facilitate integration of both sexes in managerial positions.

Stogdill's (1974) monumental review of the leadership literature virtually ignores the issue of possible male-female differences in leadership. Sex is not even listed among the roster of physical characteristics in leadership trait studies examined through 1970. The few studies he encountered using females were restricted mostly to student populations.

Since about 1970, however, this gap in our knowledge has begun to change. It is changing rapidly and at an increasing rate. Now it is rare to find a copy of a journal reporting organizational research that <u>does not</u> have a paper or two on the male-female topic. While the theoretical backgrounds, approaches, and methodologies vary, these recent studies are helping us learn a lot about the phenomenon, a phenomenon which even itself is changing. The present paper represents the continuation of an attempt to close one aspect of the gap, specifically that having to do with sex effects in evaluations of leadership behavior.

Evidence regarding perceived differences in male and female roles abounds (e.g., Barnard, 1976; Broverman, Vogel, Broverman, Clarkson, &

Rosencrantz, 1972; Komaravosky, 1974; Laws, 1976). There is also plenty of evidence that women are treated differently upon entering the organization (e.g., Barnard, 1976; Epstein, 1975; Hennig & Jardim, 1977; Kanter, 1977). There is further evidence that the role of manager is seen as masculine (Schein, 1973, 1975). However, despite the preponderance of sex-role stereotypes, with respect to the actual behavior of male and female leaders, most of the little evidence available suggests there are no differences (e.g., Bartol, 1973; Day & Stogdill, 1972; Doll, 1965).

Although there may be little difference in the way males and females behave on the job, it is clear that there are differences in the way their behavior is evaluated. Fidell (1970) found that females were rated lower than males with identical credentials when applying for psychology department faculty positions. Goldberg (1968) and Pheterson, Kiesler, and Goldberg (1971) found female authors and artists were rated more harshly than males for exactly the same works. Rosen and Jerdee (1973) found that action alternatives were evaluated differently for male and female supervisors.

Bartol and Butterfield (1976) had college students rate male and female supervisors using four different leadership styles. There were no consistent differences between sexes on the production emphasis and tolerance for freedom styles. Male managers were evaluated higher than females on initiating structure, and female managers were evaluated higher than males on consideration. Evaluations were also influenced by the sex of the evaluator. Females rated initiating structure higher than males, regardless of the sex of the manager being evaluated.

In a subsequent study Butterfield and Bartol (1977) expanded their sample to include managers as well as MBA students, and focused more at-

tention on characteristics of the raters that might influence evaluations of leadership behavior. Using the same quasi-experimental design, with an N of 1120, they found occupational level of the rater (i.e., undergraduate, MBA student, or manager) to be the best predictor of evaluations of leadership behavior. Sex of the manager being evaluated had almost no effect. Sex of the rater had scattered effects, particularly on the consideration style. In general the effect of sex, whether that of the leader or the rater, appeared diminished from earlier studies.

Powell and Butterfield (1977a) have recently taken a somewhat different approach to the study of sex effects in leadership. Recognizing the growing acceptance of the concept of androgyny--extent to which a person possesses both masculine and feminine traits (Bem, 1974)--they hypothesized that good managers would be seen as androgynous. That hypothesis was not supported. (Good managers were seen as masculine rather than androgynous.) However, they found that their subjects' own sex-role identities accounted for desirable managerial characteristics better than their subjects' actual physiological sex. In other words, what mattered was sex-role identity, not sex itself.

The present study combines and builds on the earlier work of Bartol and Butterfield (1976), Butterfield and Bartol (1977) and Powell and Butterfield (1977a). The same instruments and designs were used as in the earlier studies, and in the case of Powell and Butterfield (1977a) the same subjects as well. The general question is: What accounts for the way the behavior of male and female managers is evaluated? Is it the sex of the manager? Is it the sex of the evaluator? Is it the occupational level of the evaluator? Is it the sex-role identity of the evaluator? If there are

any differences due to these factors, are the effects consistent across a variety of leadership styles?

METHOD

Subjects

The subjects were 335 students in business courses at the University of Connecticut. Median age was 20.3 years, with a range of 19 to 49. However, 53 students were enrolled in evening MBA courses, and were classified as managers in terms of occupational level, consistent with Butterfield and Bartol (1977). The remaining 282 subjects were undergraduates. There were 240 males and 95 females.

Instruments

Leadership behavior. Subjects evaluated four leadership styles: initiating structure, production emphasis, consideration, and tolerance for freedom. For each style, a one-page story was written describing a manager using that style in a particular situation. The situation was different for each style. Each story had two versions, one in which the manager was a male, and the other, female. Otherwise the versions were identical. Sex of subordinates in the stories was left ambiguous.

Two sets of the four stories were prepared, one (N = 168) in which the managers were, in order, male, female, male, female; in the other set (N = 167) the sex order was reversed. Leadership style order was the same in both sets: initiating structure, production emphasis, consideration, and tolerance for freedom.

Following each story was a set of eight questions about such factors

as productivity, satisfaction, promotability, desirability of working for that manager, and overall effectiveness of the manager's behavior. Seven-point scales were used for each question; four scales were subsequently reversed to make the direction consistent across all questions. Complete descriptions of the stories and questions and information regarding reliability and validity may be found in Bartol and Butterfield (1976).

Sex-role identity. The Bem Sex-Role Inventory (Bem, 1974) was used to measure sex-role identification. It contains 60 items, 20 stereotypically masculine, 20 stereotypically feminine, and 20 neutral. Responses are made using a seven-point scale. Each individual first described him or herself on the inventory, then described what he or she felt a good manager would be on the inventory.

Procedure

The Bem Sex-Role Inventory (BSRI) and leadership behavior stories were administered at the beginning of the semester before any influence of course material. Assignment of a particular set of the leadership stories to a particular class of students was made randomly. Sex was not mentioned as an issue and subjects were unaware that another version of the stories existed in which sex of the manager was reversed.

Scoring of the BSRI

Each individual received a masculinity and femininity score on his/her self description. Median masculinity and femininity self-scores were then calculated for the total sample, weighting females more heavily to compensate for their fewer numbers. Individuals were then classified into one of four categories: androgynous if they were above the medians for both mas-

culinity and femininity; undifferentiated if they were below both medians; masculine if they were above on masculinity and below on femininity; feminine if they were above the median on femininity and below on masculinity. These classifications were designated "self-groups."

The same procedure was used to create "ideal-groups" on scores for the good manager, using the same medians as for the self-groups to enable comparisons between self- and ideal-groups. These scoring procedures and their outcomes are more fully described in Powell and Butterfield (1977a).

Design

For each leadership style there were five possible independent variables: sex of manager, sex of subject, occupational level of subject, self-group on BSRI, and ideal-group on BSRI. This was in effect a 2 x 2 x 2 x 4 x 4 design. However, this full model was not tested for several reasons. First, at this stage of the research we were concerned primarily with main effects. Earlier work had shown very few interaction effects (Bartol & Butterfield, 1976; Butterfield & Bartol, 1977). Second, given the complexity of the possible interaction effects in such a design, interpreting them could be extremely difficult. Third, empty cells, particularly those involving interactions with ideal-group scores, made some tests impossible anyway, including in particular the full model. Consequently a number of different models were tested, with the most illustrative findings reported in the results section.

In all cases, results were analyzed separately for each leadership style. A multivariate analysis of variance was used on the eight evaluative questions (the dependent variables) for each style. This takes into

account their interrelationships and is preferred over univariate analysis when variables are intercorrelated (Cooley & Lohnes, 1962).

RESULTS

The first model tested included sex of manager, sex of evaluator, and occupational level of evaluator as independent variables. This design was used to compare results with those of Butterfield and Bartol (1977), although their level variable had a third category, day MBA students, not included in the present study. Table 1 presents results of the multivariate analyses of variance for each of the four leadership styles. The results indicate that the only variable to have a significant effect in the model is level of evaluator. It has a significant main effect on the first three leadership styles, and is included in a triple interaction with manager and respondent sex on the initiating structure style, and in another interaction (with manager sex) on the tolerance for freedom style.

When a multivariate F is significant, it is appropriate to follow with univariate analyses for each of the dependent variables (Hummel & Sligo, 1971). For the triple interaction none of the eight items had an univariate F less than $p = .05$. For the level by manager sex interaction on tolerance for freedom, only one of the eight items yielded an F below $p = .05$. Univariate results for the main effect of level varied across the three styles. Table 2 shows the means for the one item for each style which had the most significant level effect. They are presented so the reader may see the nature of the level effect, without having to inspect dozens of means. In general, undergraduates rated the initiating structure and pro-

duction emphasis styles higher than did managers, while managers rated the consideration style higher than did undergraduates.

To this point the results indicate that sex of manager and sex of evaluator had virtually no effect on evaluations of leadership style, while occupational level of evaluator did affect such evaluations. A number of models were tested that included sex-role identity scores for self and the ideal manager, both separately and in various combinations with the other independent variables. In no case did either self-group scores or ideal-group scores yield a significant multivariate F ($p \leq .05$), either as a main effect or in interaction with other variables. This lack of significant findings was true for all four leadership styles. For illustrative purposes, Table 3 presents main effect MANOVA results for each of the two variables. These are conservative F's, taken from models that included no other independent variables. The effect of self-group scores on the initiating structure style often approached significance. Inspection of the appropriate means (not shown) indicated that there was a tendency for subjects in the undifferentiated group to rate the initiating structure style less highly than did the other sex-role identity groups. With that possible exception, however, we can say in general that our subjects' sex-role identities did not influence their evaluations of various leadership styles.

DISCUSSION

The results indicate a marked lack of sex effects in evaluations of leadership styles. Results combining the sex of manager, sex of evaluator and occupational level of evaluator variables corroborate the recent find-

ings of Butterfield and Bartol (1977). Occupational level is the best predictor, and the two sex variables have even less of an effect than the prior study showed. The level effects are the same across the two studies. Undergraduates value structure and production emphasis more than do managers, and managers value consideration more than do undergraduates. There were no differences on the tolerance for freedom style here, while Butterfield and Bartol found weak effects for that style in their study.

Noting the decreasing effect of sex in recent leadership studies, we thought that sex-role identity might help account for evaluations of leadership behavior. It clearly does have an influence on views of a good manager (Powell & Butterfield, 1977a, 1977b). However, the sex-role identity variables added nothing to the variance in leadership evaluations. Whether a person is masculine, feminine, androgynous, or undifferentiated in terms of sex-role identity does not seem to influence the way that person evaluates given leadership styles. Neither does whether the person is male or female, nor whether the manager is male or female. None of the various interactions of the sex and sex-role identity variables had any effects either.

What does matter is occupational level. Students and managers rate leadership styles differently. This suggests that experience and education may be more important factors in leadership than sex is. Or, at least, sex may no longer be as important as it once was. While the stereotypes may persist, and may be strongly influenced by one's own sex-role identity, as the two Powell and Butterfield (1977a, 1977b) studies indicate, the actual behaviors of male and females on the job may be quite similar (Bartol, 1973; Day & Stogdill, 1972).

Even the stereotypes are changing. Good evidence for this is present in the data at hand. The sample was chosen to be as similar as possible to the one used by Bartol and Butterfield (1976), i.e., business students at a New England state university. The stereotypical effects they found were not found here. It may be that in the three years separating the two data collections (Fall of 1973 vs. Fall of 1976) the sex effect phenomenon has withered markedly.

Education and experience contribute to the withering. Powell and Butterfield (1977b) found graduate students, especially females, had less sex-role stereotypic self-descriptions than undergraduates. In the present study, undergraduates rated the task and production-oriented styles higher than people working full-time in organizations. These are stereotypic managerial styles, which may be less valued after exposure to them. In this sense our findings support those of Schein (1975), who found experienced female managers had less stereotypic views about managers than inexperienced female managers. They also support those of Osborn and Vicars (1976), although we do not necessarily agree with their argument that previously reported sex differences are an artifact of laboratory studies.

Sex roles remain an obvious part of contemporary life. Though hardly non-existent, they may be a decreasing part of organizational life, and a less important factor in evaluations of leadership behavior than they once were. Theory and research with respect to both sex roles and organizational behavior must continue to monitor, explain, and predict what is happening.

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Table 1

Multivariate Analysis of Variance Results for Sex and Occupational Level Model

Independent Variables	Leadership Styles: Initiating Structure		Production Emphasis		Consideration		Tolerance for Freedom	
	F[a,b]	p	F[a,b]	p	F[a,b]	p	F[a,b]	p
Manager Sex (M)	.54	.83	.32	.96	.78	.62	1.03	.42
Evaluator Sex (S)	.78	.62	1.09	.37	.98	.45	1.34	.22
Evaluator Level (L)	2.44	.01	2.57	.01	2.23	.03	.46	.89
M x S	.56	.81	1.28	.26	.85	.56	.96	.47
M x L	1.38	.20	1.51	.15	.55	.82	2.19	.03
S x L	.59	.79	.67	.73	1.01	.43	.35	.95
M x S x L	2.08	.04	.99	.44	.88	.53	1.08	.38

[a]df = 8/320

[b]Based on Wilks' lambda criterion

Table 2

Illustrative Univariate Level Effects

Leadership Style/ Evaluation Question	Means: Undergrads. (N = 282)	Means: Managers (N = 53)	F[a]	p
Initiating Structure				
1) Present Productivity	5.14	4.49	16.74	.001
Production Emphasis				
8) Overall Effectiveness	3.39	2.76	7.05	.02
Consideration				
1) Present Productivity	4.11	4.60	5.95	.01

[a]df = 1/327

Table 3

Illustrative Multivariate Analysis of Variance Results for Self and Ideal Manager Groups on Bem Sex Role Inventory

	Self-Group		Ideal-Group	
	$F^{a,b}$	p	$F^{a,b}$	p
Initiating Structure	1.42	.09	1.27	.17
Production Emphasis	.78	.77	.89	.61
Consideration	1.18	.25	1.09	.35
Tolerance for Freedom	1.13	.30	.92	.58

[a]df = 24/940

[b]Based on Wilks' lambda criterion.